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ABSTRACT

A study examined the processes used by the Illinois Department of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education in evaluating vocational education programs and services aimed at limited English proficiency (LEP) students in Illinois. Data collection procedures used in the study included the following: (1) participant observation, document analysis, and interviews conducted during three on-site evaluations of local education agencies (LEAs) providing programs and services to LEP students; (2) a questionnaire developed to obtain input from state vocational education directors in seven states regarding current practices of states in evaluating programs for LEP students; (3) interviews conducted with 47 individuals involved with the present on-site evaluation system; and (4) a questionnaire developed to obtain input data from selected LEA personnel regarding the impact of recent evaluation on programs for LEP students. While most respondents felt that the Illinois evaluation system is accomplishing its goals, many of them also expressed concern about the areas of on-site evaluation methods and the expertise of on-site evaluation team members. (The full report of this study and a related study of current practices for assessing, identifying, and placing LEP students in vocational education in Illinois are available separately through ERIC--see note.) (MN)

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EVALUATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS SERVING LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY STUDENTS A ANALYSIS OF THE ILLINOIS THREE PHASE SYSTEM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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July, 1981

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Evaluation of Vocational Education Programs Serving Limited English Proficiency Students

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ILLINOIS THREE PHASE SYSTEM

Illinois State Board of Education

Donald F. Muirheid,
Chairman
Illinois State Board of Education

Donald G. Gill
State Superintendent of Education

July 1, 1981

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Illinois State Board of Education

Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education
Research and Development Section

Product Abstract

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- ____ 22 Cooperative Education
- ____ Career Education
- __X__ Other (Specify) LEP-Special Needs

8. Education Level:

- ____ Pre-K Thru 6
- ____ 7-8
- __X__ 9-10
- __X__ 11-12
- __X__ Post-Secondary
- __X__ Adult
- ____ Teacher (Pre-service)
- ____ Administrator (Pre-Service)
- ____ Other (Specify) ____

9. Intended for Use By:

- ____ Student
- __X__ Classroom Teacher
- __X__ Local Administrator
- __X__ Teacher Educator
- __X__ Guidance Staff
- __X__ State Personnel
- ____ Other (Specify) ____

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- __X__ Limited English Proficiency
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16. General Description (State the general objective and suggested method of use. Summarize the content and tell how it is organized. Continue on back of this sheet or on another sheet, if necessary.):

The purpose of the study was to provide a better understanding of the processes used by the Illinois Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education (DAVTE) in evaluating vocational education programs and services aimed at limited English proficient (LEP) students in Illinois. This was accomplished by developing and portraying a comprehensive picture of the current evaluation process. Included in the body of data were the views and concerns of several groups who are involved in (see attached)

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and affected by the on-site evaluation process for vocational education programs in Illinois. Data, views, concerns, and improvement-oriented recommendations were collected from Team Leaders, Team Members, local administrators, teachers, counselors, students and community members, as well as DAVTE personnel. Responses to a series of four major research questions were sought:

1. What procedures have the DAVTE undertaken in order to evaluate programs and services aimed at LEP populations?

2. What are other states doing in evaluating services and programs aimed at LEP populations?

3. What are the views and concerns of the DAVTE staff, local administrators and board members, instructors, students and community members with respect to the evaluation of programs and services aimed at LEP populations?

4. What is the extent and nature of the impact on local education agencies that were evaluated in FY 1980 and care serving LEP students?

A variety of procedures were used to collect the data utilized in the study:

1. Participant-observation, document analysis and interviews were conducted while the principal investigator participated in three on-site evaluations of local education agencies providing programs and services to LEP students.

2. A questionnaire was developed to obtain input from state vocational education directors, regarding the current practices of states in evaluating programs and services aimed at LEP students.

3. Interviews were conducted with 47 individuals to discover and verify the views and concerns regarding the present on-site evaluation system. The interviews included: DAVTE staff, local administrators, instructors, students and community members, i.e., employers parents, Advisory Council members, etc.

4. A questionnaire was developed to obtain input from selected LEA personnel, regarding the impact on programs and services provided to LEP students that were evaluated by the TPS in fiscal year 1980. Follow-up phone and personal interviews were conducted to acquire a further in-depth perspective of the impact. In addition, document analysis was

conducted to consider the composition of the on-site evaluation team, recommendations made by the team, changes in the One and Five Year Plan, and also the number of LEP students being served by the LEA.

The discussion, conclusions and recommendations are included in the executive summary.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the study was to provide a better understanding of the processes used by the Illinois DAVTE in evaluating vocational education programs and services aimed at limited English proficient (LEP) students in Illinois. This was accomplished by developing and portraying a comprehensive picture of the current evaluation process. Included in the body of data were the views and concerns of several groups who are involved in and affected by the on-site evaluation process for vocational education programs in Illinois. Data, views, concerns, and improvement-oriented recommendations were collected from Team Leaders, Team Members, local administrators, teachers, counselors, students and community members, as well as DAVTE personnel. Responses to a series of four major research questions were sought:

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DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Evaluation Procedures of the Illinois DAVTE

In 1971-72 the Illinois DAVTE developed and implemented a formal planning and evaluation system to insure the maintenance, growth, and quality of all vocational education programs and services (Illinois State Board of Education, 1980). In order to fully understand the procedures of this Three Phase System (TPS) several types of data were collected. Data was collected through participant-observation in three actual on-site evaluations, review of relevant documents and

instruments, and also through interviews with Team Members and Leaders, LEA personnel, and staff from the DAVTE.

The data indicated that indeed, the TPS is well received by the LEA's. Personnel at the local education agencies and the Team Members perceived the overall on-site evaluation as a positive and useful activity. These positive feelings toward the overall on-site evaluation appear to dissipate somewhat with particular reference to the usefulness of the on-site visitation in evaluating programs and services aimed at LEP students.

The procedures and instruments provided by the on-site evaluation did not appear to assist either the Team Leader or Members in assessing the quality of programs serving LEP students. The most specific evaluative task under the Student Services Section of the Team Member Handbook focused on the "appropriateness of criteria used to identify disadvantaged, handicapped and limited English proficiency students and the impact of additional services provided to these students." However, little information or guidance was given to Team Leaders or Members in order to determine appropriate identificaton criteria or substantial impact. The process seems to rely very heavily upon the knowledge of Team Leaders and Team Members in determining the extent and quality of programs and services for LEP students.

Specific information and guidelines provided by the DAVTE concerning programs and services for LEP students is very limited. Currently, the most substantial piece of information provided by the DAVTE to LEAs and to Team Leaders is a handbook developed by

Lopez-Valadez (1979) entitled: Vocational Education for the Limited English-Speaking: A Handbook for Administrators. While this handbook provides an excellent overview and introduction to funding resources and initial programmatic concerns, it does not provide indepth information regarding theoretical, methodological and programmatic issues relative to providing services to LEP students.

Since the efforts of serving LEP students in vocational education is new, there is very little experience to draw on, and very little written on which to base a conceptual framework (Hurwitz, 1981). Most of the past professional experience of the DAVTE staff, Team Leaders and Members, and LEA personnel generally appear to be very limited relative to programs and services for LEP students in vocational education. This void in experience in providing services to LEP students clearly affects the comprehensive and quality of programs provided, as well as how these programs are evaluated.

The scope and size of the present TPS may also affect its ability to do a thorough evaluation. The TPS was field-tested at seven sites during 1970-71. The 1971-72 evaluations included 70 LEAs, the 1972-73 evaluations expanded to 116 LEAs, 72 evaluations were evaluated during 1974-75, 78 were evaluated during 1976-77, 153 were evaluated during 1977-78, 150 LEAs were evaluated in 1978-79, and 148 LEAs were evaluated in 1979-80 (Illinois State Board of Education, 1980). According to the 1978-79 Composite Report, the 148 LEAs evaluated in FY 1979 included: 129 secondary schools, and post-secondary community colleges, and 10 state agencies in

corrections, mental health and rehabilitation services. Teams ranged from 1 to 33 members in size and involved over 750 total Team Members.

The TPS has provided over the last decade beneficial evaluation results which have assisted in the overall development, planning and accountability tasks of the DAVTE. However, in view of the steady increase of LEAs that are being evaluated each year, and also given that three-day on-site evaluations with small teams are the primary method of evaluating LEAs; it is therefore doubtful, whether the on-site evaluations can produce thorough and comprehensive evaluations. Consideration must be given to the fact that, fiscal resources are probably insufficient for conducting "true" comprehensive indepth evaluations.

Evaluation Procedures of Other States

The questionnaire which was mailed to state vocational education directors was designed to provide some empirical account of how many states have a separate or specific evaluation process for evaluating vocational education programs serving LEP students. More specifically, the intent of the questionnaire was to identify the nature and extent of evaluation practices in other states. Data were obtained via questionnaire responses from 41 states and four territories. Additional data were also obtained from state education agency (SEA) personnel via follow-up telephone interviews.

Results from the questionnaire indicated that the vast majority of states (91%) did not have a separate evaluation process for evaluating programs serving LEP students. This data is consistent

with a study undertaken by the National Institute of Education (NIE). The study by NIE focused on significant consequences of selected changes in federal vocational education legislation adopted in 1976 (Education Amendments of 1976, P. L. 94-482). The study's interim report by NIE (1980) in speaking about how states were evaluating programs for special populations stated the following:

> Less attention has been given to the fourth requirement laid down by the regulations, evaluating the results of additional services to special populations. The program review process typically examines the attention given to special populations, but focuses on access, not the results of, vocational programs and services. (National Institute of Education, 1980, p. V-12).

Data from the questionnaire indicated that 85% the respondents felt their states were effective in meeting the evaluation requirements set forth by Section 112 (Education Amendments of 1976). Forty-six percent (46%) of the respondents indicated that their state was effective in evaluating programs and services aimed at LEP students. Further 33% of the respondents felt their state was effective in utilizing evaluation results in the improvement of programs and services aimed at LEP students. Overall these data reflected an optimistic and positive view of st e efforts in this area. However, 37% indicated that their efforts needed to be revised to meet the needs of LEP students.

States in general are evaluating and collecting data on programs and services aimed at LEP students in a ..ited fashion. The types of data collected address access and criteria for identification. The data do not reflect impact of vocational education programs.

Data collected is reflective of the information needs required by the Vocational Education Data System (VEDS). The VEDS was a result of the 1976 Education Amendments (Sec. 112). The evaluation requirements (Sec. 112) intended to promote a rational planning and systematic national evaluation process. Information in the VEDS includes: instructional expenditures, classification of students by handicapped, disadvantaged, LEP, racial/ethnic, and sex. In addition, student unduplicated headcounts in occupational programs are also reported. The data in the VEDS are aggregated across localities, and states to form a national picture (Section 163(a)(1)).

Quality of programs and services provided to LEP students is rarely accomplished. According to Smith and Holt (1980), the evaluation procedures for the measurement of student achievement constitutes the least developed component of state vocational education evaluation systems. Smith and Holt (1980) state the following: "Only one-fifth of the states had in 1978 procedures for the assessment of student achievement; those procedures were mostly in the development or pilot-testing state" (P. 34).

Mainly through the impetus of Public Law 94-482 which identified persons of LEP as a national priority, states began developing programs and services to meet the needs of LEP students. However, the development and evaluation requirements specified in the law (P.L. 94-482) required knowledge and expertise which many state personnel did not appear to have.

Critical Views and Concerns

Interviews were conducted with a variety of individuals. Persons interviewed were members of the State Advisory Council for Vocational

Education, staff of the DAVTE, local administrators, local instructors, local guidance and counseling personnel, students and community members. The total number of interviews held with different individuals totaled forty-seven (47). Some persons were interviewed twice for the purpose of amplication, clarification or verification of themes and issues. The analysis of the data gained through the interviews was an ongoing process.

Four themes were identified by the interviewers as being major issues or concerns relevant to the evaluation of vocational programs or services serving LEP students. The interviewer was not attempting to generate standardized stimuli, such as test items or questionnaire items. The principal stimuli was considered to be those issues or concerns which were most germane or natural to the interviews. The four main themes emerging from the interviews are as follows:

A. Strengths and weaknesses of the on-site visitation.

B. Changes occurring in the areas of programs and services aimed at LEP students as a result of the on-site evaluation.

C. Expertise and composition of on-site Team Members.

D. Possible changes of the on-site evaluation process with respect to evaluating programs and services aimed at LEP students.

The discussion and conclusions drawn from the data collected via the interviews will be presented according to the four main themes.

A. Strengths and weakness of the on-site visitation.

Strengths of the on-site evaluation which were identified are as follows: the positive effects on team members, the positive impact on LEA's, beneficial and timely evaluation reports, opportunity by LEA personnel to express opinions, and the comprehensiveness of the evaluation process. The issues related to the weaknesses of the on-site evaluation are as follows: the composition of the team members, likelihood of friends evaluating friends, lack of LEA preparation prior to on-site visitation, lack of team member preparation prior to on-site visitation, and the inability to evaluate the quality of instruction and programs via the on-site process.

The strengths and benefits of the on-site evaluation process are generally seen as far out-weighing it's weaknesses. The TPS was perceived by local administrators, Team Leaders, and the staff of the DAVTE as being the "moving force" which assisted vocational education to develop and maintain a high level of quality throughout the State of Illinois. Most weaknesses of the system were perceived as minor deficiencies of an otherwise excellent system. The impact of the TPS on LEAs over the last ten years was seen as most productive. However, Team Leaders and local administrators which had extensive experience with the TPS expressed a concern relative to lack of follow-through on recommendations by the DAVTE. This lack of follow-through on recommendations both by LEAs and the DAVTE may very well affect the effectiveness of the TPS in the future.

B. Changes occurring in the area of programs and services aimed at LEP students as a result of the on-site evaluation.

The interview and questionnaire data concerning changes that had occurred in LEP programs and services as a result of the on-site visitation did not reflect variability. The data consistently reflected a paucity of changes as a result of an on-site visitation. The scarcity of changes which were attributed to the on-site evaluation are most likely explained by (1) the lack of emphasis placed on LEP students by the TPS, and (2) the lack of awareness concerning LEP student needs by the on-site evaluation team. This dearth of emphasis and awareness on LEP students appears to significantly affect the quantity and quality of conclusions, recommendations, and suggested improvements provided in the final on-site evaluation report.

The content related to LEP issues and concerns found in final on-site evaluation reports were extremely scarce. In reviewing final evaluation reports, conclusions and recommendations generally addressed whether handicapped, disadvantaged or LEP students were receiving additional services. The quality or impact of these services were rarely addressed. Additionally, suggested improvements rarely reflected comprehensive or in-depth improvements toward LEP programs and services. Those changes occurring in LEAs according to interviews, were the results of LEA personnel interests and efforts in the quest to better serve LEP students.

C. Expertise and composition of on-site team members.

The interview and questionnaire data regarding the effects that evaluation team member expertise have on the evaluation of programs and services aimed at LEP students were varied. The data ranged from the effects being unsubstantial to being critical in evaluating these type of programs and services. Persons who perceived the effects on the programs as being unsubstantial, also viewed the concept of teamwork as being productive and beneficial. Team Leaders were often times viewed as the key to the comprehensiveness of the on-site evaluation. Team Leaders are generally expected by the DAVTE to be cognizant of issues and concerns relative to LEP student programs and services.

Selection of qualified team members was seen as essential and advantageous for a comprehensive evaluation. Local education agencies which were serving LEP students and were being evaluated by an on-site team which did not have an experienced special needs team member, were perceived as not fully benefiting from a comprehensive on-site evaluation.

D. Possible changes of the on-site evaluation process with respect to evaluating programs and services aimed at LEP students.

The interview and questionnaire data related to possible changes of the on-site evaluation process regarding LEP students were diverse. Most persons interviewed focused on three changes. They were as follows: the composition of

the team, the interview tasks in the Team Member Handbook, and the role of the DAVTE in assisting LEA's implement recommendations found in the final evaluation report.

The changes suggested in the interviews indicated the lack of emphasis by the TPS on LEP issues and concerns and also the lack of awareness concerning LEP student needs by on-site evaluation teams. Possible changes which were suggested, attempt to increase the emphasis on LEP student programs and services by adding interview task to the Team Member Handbook and also by insuring that team members have the necessary experience and knowledge relative to LEP programs and services. Persons interviewed realize the lack of expertise and information available regarding LEP students and appeared to place the responsibility with the DAVTE for increasing the emphasis on LEP student programs and services and the awareness of LEP student needs. This could be accomplished by disseminating the most up-to-date developments and strategies on how to serve LEP students via publications, in-service workshops, consultant services and through an on-site evaluation which could cultivate, sensitize and encourage LEAs to better serve LEP students.

The Extent and Nature of the Impact

Several data gathering techniques were used to collect data regarding the extent and nature of the TPS impact on local education agencies that were evaluated in school year 1979-80. The data were

collected through a questionnaire and formal and informal interviews. The questionnaire which was mailed to 33 LEA vocational education directors was designed to provide some quantifiable measures of the effect the on-site visitation had on programs and services provided to LEP students. Following the Questionnaire on the Effects of the TPS, interviews were conducted with personnel of three selected LEAs, Team Leaders, LEP students, and regional vocational administrators. The purpose of the interviews were to acquire a further in-depth perspective of the impact of the on-site evaluation upon programs and services provided to LEP students.

Results from the questionnaire indicated that over 76% of the respondents rated their overall vocational education program in their district as being "above" or "well above" average. Data also indicated that a minimal percentage (0.06%) of LEA administrators, vocational instructors and guidance/counseling personnel were able to communicate at least minimally with LEP students in their native language. Furthermore, the data indicated that 76% of the LEA staff had little or no in-service training concerning issues and concerns of LEP students within the last two years.

Data from the questionnaire regarding the impact of the on-site evaluation were varied. Nearly 62% of the responding administrators indicated that the LEAs had gotten some good ideas on how to improve programs and services aimed at LEP students. However, over 66% of the respondents indicated that the changes that were being made in programs and services for LEP student were <u>not</u> the direct result of information provided by the on-site evaluation report. Moreover, 57%

indicated that the on-site evaluation process had not assisted their LEAs in becoming aware of resources or services designed to improve programs and services aimed at LEP students.

The data acquired through interviews depicted minimal impact on programs and services aimed at LEP students by the on-site evaluation. Changes that were made in the improvement of programs and services were perceived as a direct result of the efforts of LEA personnel and were not direct results of the on-site evaluation.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The DAVTE on-site evaluation process was discovered to be a formidable positive factor in the overall maintenance, growth and quality of vocational education programs and services in Illinois. This study revealed, however, that the on-site evaluation process was having a minimal positive impact on vocational education programs and services serving LEP students. While vocational education programs aimed at LEP populations are a relatively recent educational forum, very little is known about the operation of these programs, the instructional practices, and the effects on trainees in Illinois and other states.

The TPS in accomplishing it's three general goals of developing, planning and insuring accountability for vocational education, should serve to make persons involved in vocational education more aware of LEP issues and concerns. Furthermore, the on-site evaluation process in evaluating services provided to LEP populations should also serve to increase the awareness and emphasis on LEP students within the state and local education agencies. In addition

to obtaining this increased awareness of and emphasis on LEP students, formative program data would assist LEAs in making appropriate changes and improvements in programs and services provided to their LEP population. In view of the minimal positive impact the on-site evaluation is having on programs and services serving LEP students, recommendations are provided to strengthen an already excellent TPS. These recommendations represent a host of views collected in the study; they are global in nature and are not presented in a prioritized fashion.

The DAVTE should continue with the on-site evaluation with some modification.

The DAVTE should evaluate the entire TPS to insure quality of programs and instruction of all vocational education in the State of Illinois.

The DAVTE should establish procedures to identify individuals who can serve as consultants to the DAVTE and LEAs relative to evaluation of LEP programs and services. These individuals could provide several types of services; serve as Team Members, provide inservice training to Team Leaders, Team Members, and LEA personnel. They could also assist in identification and development of criteria and guidelines for quality programs and services provided to LEP students.

The DAVTE should develop and/or identify existing resources which would assist LEAs in developing and evaluating programs and services to LEP students.

The DAVTE should develop criteria and guidelines to assist Team Leaders and Team Members in evaluating programs and services aimed at LEP students.

The DAVTE should increase the utilization of data already being collected via the student/employer follow-up studies and the VEDS reporting system relative to LEP students. Utilization may include studies and special reports concerning effects of vocational education programs and services on LEP populations.

The DAVTE should modify or supplement the Team Member Handbook, the School and Community Data Form, the student and faculty Preliminary Evaluation Instruments to solicit specific data relative to quality and impact of programs and services provided to LEP students.

The DAVTE should increase and strengthen it's follow-up activities following on-site evaluations. This activity will insure and assist LEAs with the implementation of the recommendations made by the on-site evaluation team.

The DAVTE should study the benefits of incorporating a self-study component into the TPS.

The DAVTE should consider utilizing of a separate evaluation process (separate from the TPS) which would provide an in-depth perspective on programs and services serving LEP students. Possible evaluation alternatives could be:

1. Identify a cadre of consultants which are knowledgeable in the area of LEP students, and contract these consultants to conduct an in-depth evaluation of programs and services provided to LEP students

2. Select LEAs that are serving communities with a sizable LEP population and have a consultant from the DAVTE, the Regional Vocational Administrator and an LEP consultant conduct an in-depth evaluation of the programs and services provided to LEP students

3. Once every four years the DAVTE should require LEAs that are serving LEP students, to conduct internal in-depth evaluations with regards to the programs and services being provided to LEP students. LEAs could possibly acquire assistance from the cadre of consultants identified in alternative 1

The DAVTE should sponsor further studies on how to provide comprehensive and quality vocational education programs and services to LEP students. In addition, studies should focus on how to determine the effects of these programs and services on LEP students.

Local education agencies should utilize the Locally Directed Evaluation Materials provided by the DAVTE to evaluate their own programs and services aimed at LEP students. This locally directed evaluation process would assist LEA personnel in becoming more aware of LEP student needs and consequently change or improve the programs and services being afforded to LEP students.

Local education agencies should develop procedures for identifying LEP students in vocational education. This lack of procedures is consistent with the findings reported by Cheaney (1981).

Local education agencies should be supportive of the efforts of vocational instructors, VESL/ESL instructors and the guidance/counseling staff in serving the needs of LEP students.

LEA's should utilize whatever resources or services that are made available to them by DAVTE concerning LEP student programs and services.

Universities should offer off-campus courses for local personnel on planning and evaluating vocational education programs and services for LEP students.

Universities should encourage further research on the planning and evaluating of vocational education programs and services for LEP students.